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UNCLAS SAN JOSE 000226

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DEPARTMENT FOR WHA/CEN, S/ES-CR, AND S/ES-O
PLEASE PASS TO USTR

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [OPDC](#) [CS](#)

SUBJECT: ARIAS-BUSH THANK YOU LETTER FOR CAFTA EXTENSION

1. On February 26, 2008, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias transmitted letters (in English) to President Bush and USTR Susan Schwab thanking them for the decision to grant a CAFTA-DR entry-into-force extension for Costa Rica. The texts of the two letters are virtually identical. Post previously emailed scanned copies of the originals to the Department (WHA/CEN). The original letters will be pouched to WHA/CEN to forward to the White House.

2. The text of the letter to President Bush follows:

His Excellency George W. Bush
President of the United States

Please accept my warmest greetings.

I believe that no one understands the labors and worries of one President, better than another. The exercise of power is a solitary business; however, that solitude allows for profound empathy among those who occupy similar positions, even hundreds or thousands of miles apart. Although I am familiar with that empathy, because I too feel it for all of my colleagues, I am nonetheless amazed at the generosity of your government in granting Costa Rica an extension for the entry into force of the Dominican Republic - Central American - United States Free Trade agreement (CAFTA-DR).

Costa Rica has always followed its own path, at its own pace. It did so when our nation abolished the death penalty, and when it declared public education to be free and obligatory for both genders. It did so when it abolished its army, and when it dared to declare its neutrality in the face of any armed conflict. It did so two decades ago by becoming the voice of peace on this isthmus, and today by serving as the voice of Peace with Nature. The Free Trade Agreement has not escaped this singularity. As you know, the Agreement was approved in the first referendum in our history. That process was a milestone in the development of our democracy, and has been a source of pride for our citizens. However, the process caused considerable delays in the approval of the Implementation Agenda that CAFTA-DR requires. Although significant advances have taken place in the heart of our Legislative Assembly, it's clear that we will need a few months more. For that reason, I sincerely thank you for your willingness to allow us these months of extension.

The friendship between our nations has always been steady and lasting. I trust that this experience will strengthen it still further. After all, friendship seeks not uniformity, but harmony; it seeks not the extinction of diversity, but the tolerance of it. Many thanks for understanding the differences that distinguish us, and for lending a hand to the millions of producers and consumers for whom the borders that divide us are beginning to disappear.

Allow me to reiterate the assurances of my highest consideration.

Oscar Arias Sanchez
President of the Republic of Costa Rica

BRENNAN